# REMARKS
ON
'Squire *AYRE's* MEMOIRS
OF THE
LIFE and WRITINGS
OF
Mr. *POPE.*
IN A
# LETTER
TO
Mr. *EDMUND CURL,*
BOOKSELLER.
WITH
Authentic MEMOIRS of the LIFE and WRITINGS of the ſaid *E——C——l.*

*Some free from Rhime or Reaſon, Rule or Check,*
*Break* Priſcian's *Head, and* Pegaſus's *Neck.*
*Down, down they 'larum with impetuous Whirl,*
*The* Miltons *and the* Pindars *of a* Curl. DUNCIAD.

*LONDON:*
Printed for M. COOPER, at the *Globe* in *Pater-noſter-row.* 1745.

# *Remarks*, &c.

*Friend* EDMUND,

YOU, I believe, will be the laſt Perſon in the World to aſk why theſe Remarks are addreſs'd to you: Many indeed may, as you have prudently contriv'd to have your Name wanting in the Title-Page of the Work under Conſideration; as you neither appear there as Author, Proprietor, nor Bookſeller, perhaps judge it at beſt but a random Thought in me to fix on you as the Perſon ſelected from the reſt of the World to addreſs my Reflections on it to, and think that ſome one of the Noble Lords, Mr. *Pope*'s Executors, or of thoſe Gentlemen whom he honour'd with his particular Friendſhip,

might have been a much properer Choice: Nay, my Bookſeller, who, I know, you will tell me ought to be held an Oracle in Caſes of this Nature, when I communicated to him my Deſign of writing ſome Remarks on this ſurpriſing Performance of yours, readily told me, that there was no Perſon to whom I could properly addreſs my Letter, but the Reverend Mr. *W——n*. Theſe were the Opinions of the Vulgar: But you and I, who *better* know what Intereſt you have in thoſe Volumes, know that it is to you, and only you I ought to write: And that as far as a Father is more intereſted in the Fate of his Offspring than a Patron or a Friend can be, ſo far have you a ſuperior and juſter Claim to theſe Remarks, eſpecially as they concern the Memoirs, and not the Man, than all the Friends and Patrons in the World.

The Death of the celebrated Author whoſe Name theſe Memoirs bear, made the World expect a Work under this Title; and you, who, it muſt be own'd, are as good a Judge of Title-Pages (however little you concern yourſelf about the reſt of a Book) as any Man, I mean of Title-Pages that will bring Cuſtomers, muſt have known that the whole *Engliſh* Language could not have furniſhed you with a Set of Words more proper to engage a Multitude of Purchaſers than

*Memoirs*

*Memoirs of the Life of Mr.* Pope: Thus far, according to that Punctilio of Juſtice, directed in a homely *Engliſh* Proverb, of *giving even the Devil his Due*, I give you Praiſe; nay, I ſhall add this to what I have already allowed you, that the ſo carefully ſinking your Name not only as Author, but as any way concern'd in the Buſineſs of theſe Memoirs, was highly laudable. Thus far then through the Buſineſs of the Title-Page, the only Part of a Book, as you very rightly judge, that a Bookſeller has any thing to do with, you have acquitted yourſelf with Glory equal to that of your former Life: Nay, ſo well have you in this Affair top'd your Part, as the Phraſe is, ſo much out-done your uſual Self, by the bold Venture of the Royal Patent, that I acknowledge even myſelf who know you ſo well, to have been over-reach'd by you in this, to have bought the Work without the leaſt Suſpicion of your being at all concern'd in it, and not to have remember'd till the Stile and Manner of the Performance told me to whom it belong'd, that I had ſeen in the ſixth Volume of your *Adverſaria* of Title-Pages, of your own Contrivance, and which your Authors are to write Books to, among what you call the Occaſional, or Black Liſt, *Memoirs of the Life of Dean* Swift, — Berkley, — Pope, *&c.*

There needed not indeed this to convince, but you will allow it was ſufficient to confirm, if there could have been any remaining Doubt after the reading half a Page of that Work, the Opinion of whom it properly called Father. I need not tell you, that after having look'd ſo far into it, I naturally turn'd back to the Title-Page, and review'd the Name of the Author, of which I had before taken no farther Notice, than barely wondering that I had not ſeen it to any Book before that I remember'd, when I was immediately ſtruck with the exact Similitude which I had not before obſerv'd between the Title of this Work, and that of another of the ſame kind, publiſh'd ſome Years ſince on a like Occaſion, and called, *Memoirs of the Life of Mrs.* Anne Oldfield, *by* William Egerton, *Eſq*; that had confeſs'd its Father with a Witneſs, and this appear'd ſo like it in each Particular, that it was impoſſible but one ſhould immediately cry out, this is another of *Curl*'s 'Squires: One Remark, however, Friend, I cannot omit making, tho' I know it cannot but afflict you greatly, which is, that I think 'Squire *Ayre* is, if that be poſſible, ſomething a worſe Writer than 'Squire *Egerton.*

But leſt all this ſhould appear a ſort of Riddle to thoſe who are not ſo well acquainted with theſe Eſquires as you and I are,

are, it may not be improper to obſerve, that not only your Friends, but even your Enemies ſoon found out the Birth and Parentage of 'Squire *Egerton*, inſomuch that the Gentlemen of the *Pegaſus* at *Grubſtreet* begin one of their Memoirs in theſe Words: *An Abridgement of faithful Memoirs of the Life, Amours, &c. of Mrs.* Anne Oldfield, *by* William Egerton, *Eſq; alias* Edmund Curl, *Bookſeller.*

You cannot wonder if the exact Similitude between this before-mention'd Treatiſe of 'Squire *Egerton*'s with this of 'Squire *Ayre*, makes every body judge that the alias *Edmund Curl*, may as properly be added to the Name of the latter of theſe 'Squires, as the former, and that they may ſay of one another, and you of both, putting both, without any falſe Grammar, into the ſingular Number, as *Plautus* makes one of his *Soſias* of the other; *Jam mihi conſimilis eſt atque ego.* And now having ſaid thus much of this new Race of Gentry, theſe 'Squires of your creating, I cannot but lament their not having become ſufficiently numerous in the Days of the *Dunciad*; ſufficiently numerous I ſay, becauſe I am confident they will be allowed by every one to have all the neceſſary Qualifications beſide to have entitled them to a Place in that excellent Work, but

that

that they were too few at that Time to be of Conſequence: Had it been otherwiſe, had they given in Mr. *Pope*'s Life-time ſuch Proofs of their Origin, as this redoubted one has taken Occaſion from his Death of doing, I doubt not but they would have been ſet foremoſt in the Rank of Fame, and that *Curl*'s 'Squires had made a much greater Figure there than his *Pindar*'s and his *Milton*'s.

Common Authors think one neceſſary Qualification toward the writing a Treatiſe of any kind, is to know ſomething of the Thing or Perſon they are going to write about: 'Squire *Ayre* ſhews you in theſe Memoirs, that theſe are above being ty'd down to ſuch mean Conditions.

Others have thought the rational End of Writing to be Information, that Knowledge and Integrity were two eſſential Qualifications neceſſary to every Writer, and that a Deficiency in one will undeſignedly, and in the other purpoſely, occaſion the Reader's being deceiv'd: If then either of theſe Deficiencies are ſo fatal in a Writer, what muſt we ſay of theſe 'Squires who are abſolutely deficient in both, who have neither Knowledge nor Integrity? Why this, that ſuch Authors laid down a wrong firſt Propoſition. If indeed, as they ſay, Information were the rational End of Writing, and Deſign of Authors,

they

they muſt be acknowledg'd to be right: But if an Author may have another and much better End in View than Information, he may be allowed other Means to purſue it. Now, whether the getting Money be not an End much oftener in View in Writing, than the giving Information, I leave the Practice of the Generality of the preſent Set of Authors to determine, and dare venture to aſk you, in Confidence of Friendſhip, whether you do not think him who propoſes to get himſelf a Guinea and you twenty, by writing an atheiſtical Pamphlet, and ſucceeds to his Wiſh, an honeſter and better Man than he who diſperſes Books of Piety printed at his own Expence, for the Inſtruction of a Million.

But to come more immediately to our Buſineſs, the Examination of theſe Memoirs. The Title-Page I have already taken ſome Notice of, and one would naturally think it unneceſſary to begin higher than that: But I find on opening the Volumes, I ought to have begun with ſomething you have plac'd before it, the Royal Patent, which, on opening the firſt Volume, firſt ſtares one full in the Face, and this a vulgar Reader, or one leſs acquainted with the profound Cunning of Mr. *Curl* than I am, would ſhake his Head at as a vaſt unneceſſary Expence, and laugh at the exceſſive Folly of the Proprietor, who

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imagin'd any body would be induced to pillage where there was no Plunder, or rob the Spital, to reprint ſuch, or any Thing like ſuch miſerable Ware: Nay, I muſt own, I could not but remember, on ſeeing it, a Story, in which a Patent of juſt parallel Uſe to your's (taking it, I mean, in this vulgar Light) was granted by our merry Monarch King *Charles* II. who being taken to ſee the prodigious Skill and Intrepidity of a Fellow who, by long Practice, had learn'd himſelf to climb up the Outſide of a certain Church to its very Pinnacle, and there ſtand on his Head upon it, gave him, by way of Reward, a Patent to prevent any body's doing ſo but himſelf. But if we look deeper into your Meaning in this Expence, we ſhall find it far from mere Profuſion, and allow you thought very juſtly when you judg'd that a Book on ſo popular a Subject, and with ſuch a ſeeming Sanction of its Worth, muſt ſell to almoſt every body; and knowing how many modern Purchaſers of Books there are who never look farther in regard to them than at their Title-Pages and their Binding, determin'd, before they ſaw even the only Page they ever read, that they ſhould ſee a blazing Proof of the Value of its Contents, and prudently ſtamp'd an imaginary Worth *without*, on that which you well knew had none *within*.

The

The Title-Page, and Patent thus diſpatched, next comes in View the Preface, as it is call'd; and here you have given another convincing Proof of your conſummate Knowledge of the World in what regards your own Buſineſs. For prudently judging that tho' a great many of your Cuſtomers indeed look no farther than to the Title-Page and Covers of the Book they buy, yet there are others who, tho' they are more the Gentleman than to ſit down in a pedantic way to read a Volume through, yet love to have a general Knowledge of what it contains, and therefore, if their Affairs of more Conſequence will give them Time, will ſometimes labour through half a Preface; for theſe you have moſt judiciouſly provided, by giving them a Preface, the whole of which is not ſo long as the half of one of the unmannerly Prefaces of thoſe Authors, who inſolently imagine every body that buys muſt read their Works, and give theſe Prefaces therefore as a neceſſary Introduction: Nor is it only in the Length of this Preface of your's that you have conſulted the Good-will and good Word of this Set of Readers, but well knowing they would look no farther than into the Catalogue of the ſeveral Diſhes the Feaſt you had provided them was to conſiſt of, have boldly given them in it a large

and elegant Bill of Fare, tho', if they ſhould ſit down, it would prove the Prologue to a very ſorry Dinner.

The Preface you begin with, telling us *that the Lives of private Men, tho' they afford not Examples which may fill the Mind with Ideas of Greatneſs and Power, like thoſe of Princes and Generals, yet are they ſuch as are more open to common Imitation: There are few within whoſe Compaſs thoſe Actions are, that is, there are, comparatively ſpeaking, few Princes or Generals, but the Actions of a private Man are as Counſel to all; if good, eligible; if bad, deteſtable, and to be avoided.* This is certainly very true, and is alſo where it originally ſtands very juſt: But ſee the miſerable End of Plagiariſm; this, tho' as juſt and true a Sentiment as ever enter'd into the Heart of Man, yet by the wretched Ignorance and Folly of the Stealer, is here reduc'd to mere Abſurdity and Nonſenſe; for I do avow, and, I preſume, the whole World will join with me, that there are, comparatively ſpeaking, much fewer excellent Poets, than Princes and Generals; and therefore, if you had had the leaſt Glimpſe of Underſtanding, you muſt have ſeen that the Reaſon you give why you ſhould chuſe Mr. *Pope* for the Subject of your Treatiſe, is the very Reaſon why you ſhould not have choſen him,

him. Be careful, therefore, Friend, hereafter how you ſteal, for you ſee that ſuch is the amazing Effect of your Pen, that whatever you take from another, tho' ever ſo beautiful where it ſtood, becomes extremely abſurd with you; and however good while in the Hands of him who had a Right, if, yet I know not how it is, but while you are fingering it, it partakes, by degrees, of your Dirtineſs, and *Male dum recitas incipit eſſe tuus.*

The latter Part of the ſame Sentence fares not a whit better than the former; *the Actions of a private Man are as Counſel to all; if good, eligible; if bad, deteſtable.* This alſo is equally true and proper where it ſtood; but to what Purpoſe is it repeated here, as you have in reality ſcarce given us an Account of any Action of this private Man (as you, and perhaps you only in the World eſteem him) as a private Man.

You proceed to obſerve, that in Works of this kind few are true to their Subject; *for Partiality of Love or Hate makes the Authors magnify the good or bad Actions of the Perſon whoſe Life they write.* This is a heavy Charge on Biographers in general, and, it muſt be own'd, too often a juſt one: And this I will do you the Juſtice to declare you are abſolutely clear from, for I affirm, that it is impoſſible from your whole Work, to gueſs

whether you were a Friend or Enemy to Mr. *Pope*, or car'd any thing what became of his Character; but this, not as you are pleas'd to term it, from your not ſuffering your Admiration to carry you greater Lengths than the cooleſt Reaſoning could juſtify, for, to be very free with you, I am ſenſible that neither Admiration nor Reaſon had any Share in your Work, nor, indeed, any other Paſſion but the dear Thirſt of Gain; and hence is your avow'd Impartiality, you conſider'd that you was ſet down to write the Life of a Man you knew nothing of, but what all the World knew beſide; and therefore prudently determin'd within yourſelf, that it was your Buſineſs to reprint all you could find that others had ſaid of him: This then, be it Praiſe or Scandal, was of no particular Value to you, as either the one or the other, but merely as ſo much Matter, ſo many Lines or Pages as would fill up ſuch or ſuch a Part of the Volumes you wanted to compleat; and, notwithſtanding your known Hatred to the Man, I have this firm Opinion of your Impartiality in this Caſe, or more properly the Prevalence of your Love of Money over your Hatred to your Enemy, or indeed over any other Conſideration whatſoever, that I do believe you would have refuſed a Piece of Scandal to have inſerted a Piece of Praiſe of him, provided you could

could not have had both, and that the Article of Praiſe were but half a Page more in Quantity.

How odd is it now, that with theſe Motives in your Head, and theſe Expectations in your Heart, you ſhould attempt to put that ſtale Piece of Stuff upon us, that *it was not without ſome Entreaty that you undertook this Work*: This Excuſe, I thought, had been laught out of Doors long ago; but as you are pleas'd to endeavour to trick us into a wrong Belief of your Motives for writing this Treatiſe, by bringing it into Play again, let us examine a little, of what Uſe it can be to you.

Firſt then, give me leave to ask you, Whether it was, as *Edmund Curl*, your proper identical Self, or in your aſſum'd Perſon of *William Ayre*, Eſq; that you was thus importun'd to write theſe Memoirs? Should you tell us, it was as *Edmund Curl*, what could you expect in anſwer, but a loud Laugh? With what Intent could you be ask'd to do it? Is there any thing you could have to ſay againſt him, that you have not hired ſome of your Authors to teaze the Publick with, over and over already? or, is it probable, that any body would buy a Life of Mr. *Pope*, written by Mr. *Edmund Curl*? There, indeed, lays the great, the dreadful Bar:

Bar: There even as a Bookſeller, you could not but be concerned, and there lies reaſon enough open to the World, why you, in ſuch an Undertaking, muſt of Neceſſity aſſume a feign'd Name. Was it then, it remains to ask, in the Character of 'Squire *Ayre*, that you was thus intreated to write theſe memorable Memoirs? 'Tis eaſy to anſwer, that nobody could ask nobody; but even to allow this Animal in Idea, this unreal Mockery, a Being: Who is it, I would ask, that ſhould deſire the unknown Mr. *Ayre*, unknown to Mr. *Pope*, as Mr. *Pope* to him, to write his Life? or, might not this modeſt Gentleman eaſily have ridded himſelf of their Importunity, could he have been entreated to do it, by declaring to them, what he has ſo openly declared in his Work, that he knew nothing of Mr. *Pope*. 'Tis ſtrangely unlucky; but here you find again, how every thing becomes abſurd as you ſpeak it: What can be more ridiculous than this Talk of Entreaty to Mr. *Curl*, alias *William Ayre*, Eſq;? Whereas, had the ſame Sentence ſtood in a Preface to the ſame Work, by any of Mr. *Pope*'s Friends, it had been juſt enough, and might poſſibly have been believed. I ſhall only obſerve farther on this Paſſage, that this, and the following Sentence, where you aſſure your gentle Readers,

ders, That you had always been a profeſs'd Admirer of his Poetry, Criticiſm, and Satire, will be believed, I preſume, about equally true.

You proceed to tell us, that *your Deſign was not to write a Panegyrick, but to illuſtrate Mr.* Pope's *Works:* 'Tis pity but you had alſo told us, how you intended to do this; that is, by reprinting ill choſen Scraps of them, here and there, with the Notes as they ſtand in the ſeveral Editions of his Works; for this is all the illuſtration that I know of your having given them.

You alſo tell us, that you look'd on it as one Part of your Buſineſs, *To ſhew what manner of Man he was; as well as how great a Poet:* If you had intended your Preface ſhould have been read by any, who would alſo read your Book, I would gladly ask you, in what Part of that Work you intended to have done this? And by what Accident it happened, that ſo valuable a Part of your Work was omitted? To this End, you tell us, you *have uſed all poſſible Means; and that your Friends, as well as yourſelf, have ſpared no Pains to procure what Helps were attainable:* I before obſerved, that you ſeem to have forgotten, in the Proceſs of your Work, that this was to be any Part of it; and would only add two or three Queſtions in regard to theſe

theſe Affirmatives. As, what are all theſe Means you have uſed? Of what Sort are the Pains you have taken? And who are theſe Friends that have aſſiſted you in it? I muſt be bold to affirm, that any Man, who has gone through the Sequel of your notable Performance, will tell you, that it is very evident, no Means at all have been employed, no Pains taken, nor Friends advis'd with, nor the very End itſelf at all conſulted. *Some few Helps, you ſay, you had in your own Hands, which never were made publick*; in all Probability, now they never will be. But, I am afraid every Reader will find it natural to ask, What they were, and in what Part of your Work it is, that you forgot to inſert 'em? As to ſuch as you received from others, the World, you tell us, *is much obliged to thoſe Perſons who have been ſo kind to hand 'em to you, for this Uſe; as they have contributed to give Light into his Life.* I muſt beg leave to tell you, *Sir*, that I am of a very different Opinion; and allowing, that you ever did receive any ſuch Helps, which if I may judge of your Veracity, from other Inſtances, I very much queſtion. I think the World, inſtead of being obliged, has much Reaſon to be angry at the Perſons who had them, for putting them in ſuch ill Hands; for as you have managed it, it is very evident, that neither

ther theſe Helps, nor any thing elſe, that you have had the Handling of, have given any Light into his Life at all.

But, *moſt of all*, you ſay, *you have been aſſiſted by his own Letters, and other Works:* Here, indeed, you are varying from yourſelf, and telling Truth. But 'tis a Truth, that if it had been poſſible for you to have conceal'd, I dare affirm, you never would let us have known; for 'tis a Truth that ſpeaks aloud the Nothingneſs of your Treatiſe; for I preſume, many of your Readers will think, they were under no Neceſſity of purchaſing your Book, to learn from thence, what they already knew from his Works; and indeed, you have ſo ſtrictly kept to this Aſſiſtance, as indeed you were neceſſitated to do, it being evident, that you had no other; that all that Part of your Work, which concerns Mr. *Pope*, is no more than ſo many Pages fairly and punctually tranſcrib'd from his Works, in different Places, with the ſeveral Notes belonging to them; and even theſe Extracts ill choſen, and injudiciouſly put together: I ſaid, that Part of your Work which concern'd Mr. *Pope*, for the greater Part might as well have been printed with any other Title. You thought indeed, you tell us, that it was highly proper, in writing of Mr. *Pope*'s Patrons and Friends, not barely to mention their Names,

but to give their Hiſtory and Character: Highly proper indeed this was, to ſwell up your Volumes to ſix times the Size they needed otherwiſe have been; which, as I before obſerved, was your whole, your utmoſt End and Aim; but for what other Reaſon it could be proper, or who beſide yourſelf would think it ſo, I muſt confeſs I cannot imagine. The Purchaſers of your Book, I dare ſay, would have been much better pleaſed, to have purchas'd all that related to Mr. *Pope* ſingly, and at a ſixth Part of the Price; for I cannot imagine, why their reading the Life of Mr. *Pope*, ſhould alſo make it neceſſary, that they ſhould read Mr. *Theobald*'s, *Euſden*'s, *More*'s, &c. but as your lucky Brain has hit upon this highly proper Scheme, I think I ought to congratulate my Fellow-Purchaſers of your Work, that you puſh'd it no further; it appearing wonderful to me, that you did not, as you might aſſuredly, with equal Juſtice, introduce Memoirs of the Life, *&c.* of every Friend, and every Enemy of Mr. *Pope*'s; and by that Means, have ſwelled your Work into twenty Volumes in *Folio:* And I cannot but think, this Example of your's will be of notable Uſe to another Writer, of much your Stamp, the *Ordinary* of *Newgate*; who has already found the Way of ſtretching his Accounts of wretched Creatures,

tures, under his Care, to ſecond, and third Parts; and may, by following your Method, ſwell 'em into fifty, but adding only to his Detail of the Culprits Crimes the whole Lives and Characters of his Judges and the Jury.

That you have every where ſpoken of Mr. *Pope*, with the greateſt Impartiality, I have already allowed you; that is, if your manner of writing his ſecret Hiſtory, by tranſcribing Things well known already may be called your ſpeaking of him at all; but in the Sentence that follows this Affirmation, *i. e.* that you muſt confeſs you have not herein conſulted your own Intereſt; I cannot but think that a ſmall Alteration, the Addition of two ſhort Words only, would bring it a great deal nearer the Truth; and would fain ſee it printed in the next Edition, that you muſt confeſs you have not herein conſulted *any thing but* your own Intereſt: And this I doubt not but every Reader will be perfectly convinced of the Truth of, by that Time he has gone through a few Pages of your Work.

Among the Things we might wiſh, and expect to be informed of, in theſe Memoirs of yours, I think the being made more perfectly acquainted with the Genius of Mr. *Pope*, from a Knowledge of all that he had wrote, that is, from your having given us, as far as lay in your Power, an Account of all

the Works that were really his, though they appeared without his Name, was not the leaſt: Nay, I readily confeſs to you, this was to me, one of the principal Reaſons of my purchaſing your Memoirs; for, as I naturally gueſſed they were written by ſome Boſom Friend, and intimate Acquaintance of Mr. *Pope*'s, it was no improbable Thought, that ſuch an one might have been inform'd of thoſe Things, from him in his Life-time; and that the Reaſon of his concealing that they were his, at leaſt, in regard to the greater Part of them, might ceaſe with his Life. But how double a Diſappointment have you contriv'd to give us in this Particular; by firſt ſetting out, in ſuch a Manner as made it evident, you had it not in your Power to have given us any ſuch Satisfaction; it appearing, from the very Beginning of your Preface, that you had no Knowledge of, or Acquaintance with the Man, whoſe Life you were writing; (as every one muſt be ſenſible, that would have been the firſt Thing to have boaſted of, if you had) and undertook this Life, according to your own Account, not becauſe you had any Power of writing it well, but for fear ſomebody elſe ſhould do it worſe; and afterwards aſſuring us, that though you knew of ſome Pieces, that were really written by him, and had not his Name to them,

yet

yet that Piece of Knowledge, the only one you can pretend to have had of Mr. *Pope*, you tell us, you are prudently reſolved to keep to yourſelf: And now, my dear Friend, ſhall we believe you in this Boaſt of private Knowledge, in regard to your Author? Or ſhall we think it only a gallant Gaſconade, to give yourſelf an Air of Conſequence, in a Particular, where you might avoid coming to an Explanation? I'll frankly confeſs to you, I know not whether of the two will make you appear the more perfectly contemptible, the idle, and impudent Pretence to a Merit you had not, or the ridiculouſly keeping from the World, the only Thing you had to tell them, concerning your Author. Your other Boaſt, that the Tranſlations from *Taſſo* and *Guarini*, are your own, I readily ſubſcribe to the Truth of; and dare affirm, that there is no Perſon upon the Earth, who is acquainted with your Skill in Proſe, for theſe are only Proſe run mad, that would ever have believ'd they belong'd to any body elſe: Not that I, or any body elſe, I believe, imagin'd that you underſtood *Italian*. But, the tranſlating from a Language one does not underſtand, is a Myſtery of Miſchief your Authors have let us into long ago; by proving, that this very Mr. *Pope*, tranſlated the whole Iliad, without underſtanding a Syllable of *Greek*. This however

however is a Myſtery of Miſchief, a Piece of Cunning, that the whole World is not in the Secret of; and the Name of a Tranſlator from *Taſſo* and *Guarini*, might add a Sort of Sanction to the nameleſs Name of this 'Squire *Ayre* of yours, and make him appear Somebody in the Eyes of the Vulgar; at leaſt, till they had read this notable Performance, and that was all you wanted. You wiſely foreſaw, that they muſt buy before they could read; and conſequently, what they thought of your Author before they read his Works, not what they thought afterwards, was all that was of any Conſequence to you; and that for the reſt, there could be no Crime in ſacrificing Nobody's Reputation. Your Ends were anſwered, if the Book was made to ſell: From which Motive, for aught I know, you may have ſo different an Opinion of the Effect of this very Letter, from other People, that though the World may think I am vilifying, deſpiſing, and expoſing you, you may judge I am doing the moſt friendly Action in the World, helping off the Sale of your Book; as the advertiſing theſe Remarks is, in effect, advertiſing your Book; and that, in a Way more than barely telling the World, that there is ſuch a Work in being; that it is a Work in ſome Degree worth Notice, as ſomebody or other has thought it worth writ-

ing

ing Remarks on; and I know you ſo well, that I believe I may venture to affirm, you will very readily pardon my deſtroying its Reputation, provided, at the ſame Time, I increaſe its Sale; and would be very well pleaſed, with an Opportunity of ſelling off the whole Impreſſion on the ſame Conditions.

That you have not received the leaſt Hint from Perſons of Honour or Credit, of which you have not made ſome Uſe, I readily acquieſce in, moſt perfectly aſſuring myſelf, from your Work, that you never did receive any ſuch Hints, from any ſuch Perſon at all; and giving all due Praiſe to your ſo elegantly returning all ſuch No-Perſons your moſt grateful Thanks for Nothing. Pray, my moſt grateful and moſt gallant Mr. *Ayre*, if you will permit me, *Sir*, to addreſs you by your *alias* Name; as I am confident, the real Name of *Curl*, muſt have ſtopp'd all Correſpondence of this Kind, where, or to whom was it, that theſe Perſons of Honour and Credit ſent theſe Htnts? How came they to know Mr. *Ayre* was about writing a Work of this Kind; or indeed to know, that there was ſuch a Man as Mr. *Ayre* in being?

Upon the whole, all I think that can be learned from your Preface is; that you know Nothing of the Man, whoſe Hiſtory you propoſed

poſed to write; that 'Squire *Ayre* knew leſs of Mr. *Pope*, than 'Squire *Egerton* did of Mrs. *Oldfield*; and that therefore, *Edmund Curl*, the *aliuſque & idem* of them both, prudently reſolved, that as 'Squire *Egerton* made what he called his Life of Mrs. *Oldfield*, a paultry Collection of Prologues and Epilogues; ſo 'Squire *Ayre* ſhould make his Life of Mr. *Pope*, an injudicious Jumble of Extracts, from his, and other People's Writings;

And now, having talked thus largely of your Preface, the only Part of your Work, which comes any thing near deſerving to be called your own, you'll not wonder, when I tell you, I have very little to ſay of the reſt of your Book: I have no Quarrel to the Works of Mr. *Pope*, or *Savage*; of Mr. *Gay*, or *Garth*; of *Taſſo*, or *Guarini*; and have therefore Nothing to ſay, in regard to the Quotations from them, which you have filled your Book with; but that they would have made a much better Figure in more judicious Hands.

For the little Part of this Work of yours, however, that is your own: The Sentences that introduce, and tagg theſe Miſcellanies together, I cannot but obſerve, that they are truly worthy of you, and ſuch as I think, no other Writer could have given us. Is there another Man in the World, who would attempt

tempt to thruſt whole Volumes upon us, tho' he could not write *Engliſh*. I thought the *to ſhew of what Claſs they were in.* We *have heard Mr.* Pope *nick-named* Durgen, *by Mr.* Edward Ward; *and thinks Nothing could have induced him*, &c. *without enquiring who was his Neighbours. The Lines which r ſt ſs on Mr.* Cibber, *&c. &c. &c.* were Errors of the Preſs, till I obſerved the whole Work ſo beautifully interſperſed with Ornaments of the ſame Kind, that I could not but conclude them the grand Characteriſtic of your Writing.

Next to your Attempt of writing at all, I ſhould, I think, if it be poſſible to ſingle out any one of your Follies as more blazing than the reſt, choſe to be merry about your making Biography your Province. How much you are qualified for Encomium, I cannot give the Reader a better Proof of, than by tranſcribing your Praiſes of a certain Nobleman, of whom perhaps as much might be juſtly ſaid in Praiſe, as of any one of the preſent Age: The Accuracy and Elegance of your Stile, and the true Notions you have form'd of what are the Subjects of Encomium, in the Life of this truly great Man, may ſerve as a Specimen of your Talent that way; theſe you have given us in theſe Words: *There is none among the Nobility exceed him for Taſte,*

*his is quite grand; he hates any thing that is little, and not capable of filling the Mind, and ſpends whole Days in his Wood.* Which of your Beauties ſhall we moſt admire here? Or to take them in the Lump, who is there among our Nobility but muſt be ambitious of having ſo elegant an Hiſtorian for his Biographer? But to theſe Excellencies, let me not forget to add that greater, infinitely greater than them all, your Conciſeneſs: Of this, tho' we can have no very good Idea from your Memoirs of Mr. *Pope* in general, and that for this plain Reaſon, that it was not your Buſineſs, nor your Intereſt to be ſhort, but prolix there; yet may we from one Part of your Work, perhaps the only two Lines in which you was properly minding your Buſineſs, ſee that you have excell'd even the famous *Roman* Hiſtorian in Brevity. What has he ever left us ſo truly laconic as this memorable Sentence of your's; *The two greateſt Actions of his Life are, that he went from* London *when young to live at* Windſor-Foreſt, *and in the Year* 1716 *moved to* Twickenham *for the Remainder of his Days.* Here is indeed a ſuccinct Account of the Life of a great Man, and who but muſt applaud your unequall'd Addreſs, who, when theſe and two or three other Actions of about as much Conſequence, and which you have given an Account

count of in almoſt as ſhort a Compaſs, were all you knew of the Life and Actions of the Man whoſe Memoirs you ſat down to write, could yet ſpin out that Work into almoſt a thouſand Pages.

Why you have ſo induſtriouſly pick'd up all the little Malice you could find any where publiſh'd about this Author's Perſon or his Works, I will not aſk you; there lies, beſides that firſt great Argument of its filling up ſo much Space in your Work, this plain and obvious Reaſon for it, your long avow'd Hatred to him: But why you have here and there attempted from your own Stock to praiſe him, perhaps we muſt ſeek farther for the Motive of, and, if I may preſume to gueſs, I ſhall attribute it to a continued Deſign of hiding from the World that you are the Writer; it being impoſſible, as you may imagine, that any body ſhould ſuſpect you of ſpeaking well of Mr. *Pope:* To this Motive I would attribute theſe unmeaning Praiſes, becauſe they are, according to your manner, in what yourſelf are the Author of, too ſhort to be of any conſiderable Conſequence in ſwelling out the Work, and too wretchedly trifling to let even the weakeſt of your Readers believe they ever were deſign'd as real Praiſe. I cannot but fancy I hear that excellent Writer daub'd over with this miſerable

panegyric Saying, with a venerable Sage of old, *What have I done that ſuch a Fellow ſhould ſpeak well of me?*

Such I can paint to myſelf the Diſdain with which this Author muſt receive your Praiſes: But what muſt be his Indignation to ſee you thus revenging all the Vexation he has given you in his Life, by writing a Thing call'd his Hiſtory after his Death? Not that your Malice, or your Praiſe, tho' that be by far the greater Calumny of the two, can any way affect the Fame his Works have ſo juſtly eſtabliſh'd him; but that your taking the Taſk out of every body's Hands beſide, and, in a manner, appropriating his Memory to yourſelf, has poſſibly prevented ſome other Hand from executing ſuch a Piece with Juſtice to his Aſhes, and handing to Poſterity a Work almoſt as valuable as thoſe himſelf has left us. Such is my Opinion of the Life of this Author, whoſe moſt memorable Tranſactions, as you imagine them, you have ſum'd up in ſo few Lines, as a Subject for an underſtanding Biographer: How greatly muſt a proper Knowledge of his private Character have illuſtrated his Works? With what Pleaſure ſhould we have read, after his Death, what it was impoſſible for us to know in his Lifetime, the real Hiſtory, with all its melancholy Circumſtances of that unfortunate La-

dy,

dy, whoſe Death furniſh'd an Occaſion for perhaps the moſt finiſh'd Poem he has left behind him. The little I have learn'd of that Story, from the Hints I have heard accidentally dropt, in the few Hours of Converſation I have been ſo happy to have with Mr. *Pope*, makes me ſpeak with more Certainty of the Satisfaction it would have been to the World to have been made fully acquainted with it: And I can ſpeak with Certainty of at leaſt one Perſon to whom Mr. *Pope* has truſted it, with all its affecting Circumſtances, and who probably enough might, if not prevented by this miſerable Anticipation of your's, have given the Public that, among many other Things equally intereſting. Inſtead of this, what Reader but of common Underſtanding can ſee, with Patience, your wretched Attempt to impoſe an imaginary Explication of this Hiſtory on him, form'd out of Nothing but what the very Poem itſelf informs him of, and that too made up ſo lamely and unfaſhionable, that its not being Common-Senſe or *Engliſh*, is one of the ſmalleſt of its Faults.

How have you gone the Round through all the reſt of his Performances? And where the Notes you found to them were not enough, in Quantity I mean, for your Purpoſe, done all that in you lay to damn, with your unmeaning Praiſe, Lines that few have even

even Fame enough to have a Right, or Merit enough to know how to commend.

Not that I would be underſtood by this eager Praiſe to look on this Author, admirable as he is, as wholly free from Faults; tho', to keep his Merit, as a Poet, clear from all Aſperſion, the niceſt Judges will allow theſe Faults to be in the Deſign, not the Execution of his Poetry. Perhaps he has been no where more blamable in this reſpect in his Conduct, than in thoſe very Lines you have judiciouſly pick'd out to make up a Part of his Praiſe, nay, and perhaps it muſt here, and almoſt only here be allow'd, that the Man, the angry Man, gets the better of the judicious Poet. The Lines I would point at are thoſe memorable ones on the L—d *H*——*y*. Were it my Buſineſs to enter here into the private Character of Actions of our Author, perhaps I could make it evident that Mr. *Pope*, and Mr. *Pope* only was blamable, and highly ſo in the whole Affair that gave Birth to thoſe and other Lines of the ſame kind. But to wave that, as foreign to my Taſk, give me leave to prove to you, that however ſtrong, however keen the Satire in thoſe Lines may appear, yet they are not the moſt faultleſs you could poſſibly have choſen from his Works. For a correct Writer, I preſume, would no more have attributed a Sting and Wings to a Bug,

Bug, to which Inſect Nature has given neither, than he would have placed Boars in the Waves, or Dolphins in the Woods: But of this (I had almoſt ſaid) enough, however, not to drop this equivocally generated *Child of Dirt*, without giving you a Pleaſure, which I know cannot but be one of the greateſt imaginable to you, *viz.* the having a little new Ill-nature ſpent on Mr. *Pope*, I will give you ſome Verſes you have never ſeen before, written by a Friend of your's and mine, who knew the whole Story I have been ſpeaking of, and who car'd no more either for the Noble L——d or Mr. *Pope*, than for you or I, but out of the pure Overflowings of his Anger, on reading that Piece of Satire, ſent him the following Lines:

THE

# THE BUTTERFLY and SPIDER.

## To Mr. POPE.

*OFT have I, mov'd with Anger, ſeen,*
*Sad Object of envenom'd Spleen,*
*A painted Butterfly unfold*
*Its ſpangled Wings, bedrop'd with Gold;*
*And baſking in a Summer's Day,*
*The Glories of its Plumes diſplay:*
*While iſſuing from his mazy Cell,*
*With Rage replete, a Spider fell,*
*Indignant views the pretty Form,*
*And ſpits upon the painted Worm.*
*So* Pope, *of Spider Kind and Make,*
*A monſtrous Form, all Legs and Back,*
*Crawls hateful from his Hole obſcure,*
*Nor lovely Object can endure,*
*But views, with Envy, Pride, and Hate,*
*The ſhining Honours of the Great,*
*'Till ſqueezing forth his pois'nous Steam,*
*The ſubtle ſtill malignant Stream*
*Blackens, infectious as it flows,*
*Heroes and Stateſmen, Belles and Beaus:*
*He rails and bids the World deſpiſe*
*Whate'er his ugly Self outvies.*

And

And thus much for your Author, of whom, I think, you have had even leſs to ſay than this. But as more Matter was wanting to make up the neceſſary Quantity for your Volumes, let us examine a little whence you have drawn it: Why, if *Pope* alone could not furniſh out a ſufficient Entertainment, you muſt call in his Friends to your Aſſiſtance, and if they cannot ſupply you with ſufficient Matter, call in his Enemies; it is all one to you whether Praiſe or Defamation be going forward, ſo your great End be anſwer'd: Nay, if all theſe will not ſupply you with ſufficient Quantity, let one Man's Verſes put you in Mind of another's, and by that happy Invention call in all the Poets of the preſent and late Ages. Nay, you have, in one Inſtance, even outgone this large Allowance, bringing in, by Head and Shoulders, a Dialogue from the Craftſman, for no other Reaſon in the World but becauſe it was not Mr. *Pope*'s. Here lay an ample Field, indeed, for enlarging your Work to whatever Dimenſions you might think convenient; for by a Parity of Reaſon you might have call'd in all the Authors of the World to your Aſſiſtance. But to examine a little the Choice you have made of ſuch as you ſhould introduce, what Honour have you done to the Hiſtorians, who have left us authentic

Records of the Lives of Biſhop *Atterbury*, the Dukes of *Buckingham*, *Monmouth*, &c. by your moſt judicious Extracts! The *Male dum recitas incipit eſſe tuus*; is here again ſo very ſtrong, that did not one remember the mangled Parts of the disjointed Ruin, one would be apt to ſwear that even this Part of your Work was of your own Contrivance. The Poets you have preſs'd into your Service, fare much alike, I think, and *Taſſo* and *Guarini* eſcape you, about as well as the Author whoſe Memoirs you write.

*Garth*, *Gay*, and *Savage*, whom you attempt to praiſe, wherever you have added to the Things you have tranſcrib'd, you uſe much worſe, believe me, than Mr. *Addiſon*, whom the utmoſt of your Malice aims to defame, and whom, to tell you the whole Secret of the Point in Diſpute between you, you fancy not to have underſtood the *Italian*, for no other Reaſon in the World but becauſe you do not underſtand *him:* Give me leave then, from ſo many Inſtances of your ſuperlative Worth, to tell you this at leaſt for your Comfort, that you have a Right to ſtand firſt in the Rank of thoſe renown'd Authors, *whoſe Praiſe is Cenſure, and whoſe Cenſure Praiſe.*

But of all the Heroes you have choſen to immortalize, or, in your own more modeſt Phraſe,

Phraſe, to continue down to late Poſterity, if this your Labour ſhould live ſo long, as your moſt juſt Opinion of it ſeems to leave you no room to doubt, Mr. *Dennis*, I think, makes the moſt odd Figure: What muſt Poſterity, ſuppoſing they ſhould read your Work, and ſhould not read Mr. *Pope*'s, which I believe to be about equally probable, (Mr. *Pope*'s I mention in particular, becauſe he has left us a ſomething more natural Figure of him) what, I ſay, muſt Poſterity think of this Mr. *Dennis*, whom you, from mixing into an unintelligible Jumble the Sentiments of different Authors which you did not underſtand, have repreſented almoſt in the ſame Breath, as a very good Critic and Poet, Maſter of a great deal of Penetration and Judgment, nay, the greateſt Critic of his Age; and a Man reſolv'd beforehand to be pleas'd with nothing, a Keeper-down of riſing Merit, and a weak, as well as ungenerous Enemy of Mr. *Pope*, &c.

*Allen Ramſay*, the *Scotch* Poet, whoſe Works you have, with your uſual Propriety, forc'd in, to the great Aſſiſtance and Amplification of your own, you treat in another manner: No malicious Critic's Cenſure, no witty Sneer, nor boiſterous Mirth will you permit to keep down his riſing Honours, but all is Praiſe, all Fame, all Glory, and *Allen*

*Ramſay*, any one muſt think, who would be taught to judge from you, has more Merit, and deſerves more Fame than *Pope* or *Gay*, than *Taſſo* or *Guarini*: And why, profound Critic, why all this Accumulation of Honour here, will ſome Would-be-witty-Critic perhaps ſay, with a ſignificant Sneer? Let him laugh, but if your Praiſe anſwers your Purpoſe, we can tell him it is you ſhall win. Why did you praiſe? For what peculiar Beauties is it he has run away with ſuch a double Portion of your Encomiums? Why, for no peculiar Beauties at all, (except indeed thoſe of the Binding) but for a Reaſon worth a Million ſuch, becauſe you have forty Sets of them (a dead Stock) upon your Hands, and would be very glad, by a worſe Means than this Puff, as it is call'd, to ſell ſome of them.

But among all the Praiſes you have ſo liberally beſtow'd on a Number of People, not one of whom you had any thing to do with, among all the Characters of Perſons perfectly unneceſſary and tireſome in your Work, and in all which you have been ſo tediouſly prolix, how comes it, gentle Mr. *Ayre*, for by that Name, I think, it muſt be propereſt to addreſs you, while I am talking of your other Self as a third Perſon; among all theſe Characters, I ſay, ſo long, ſo tireſome, and unneceſſary, how came you to be ſo ſhort and

ſo

ſo imperfect in that one ſo greatly intereſting and ſo neceſſary, that of your dear Friend and, without a Figure, inſeparable Companion Mr. *Edmund Curl?* Mr. *Pope* himſelf, you know, had laugh'd away many Pages about him, and his Story, as told by that Gentleman and his Friends, has been a delightful Hiſtory to ten thouſand Readers; he as a Man ſo nearly concern'd with Mr. *Pope*, was alſo, if any Man could be ſo, a neceſſary Perſon to be nam'd a good deal at large with him: With all theſe Recommendations then, and with the Advantage of having had ſo many and ſo merry Things ſaid of him, as might have filled up almoſt a third Part of your Volumes, and that to the Satisfaction of your Readers, how comes it that you ſpeak ſo coldly of him, repeat ſo little of all that has been ſaid of him, and ſcarce allow him half a Page in your Memoirs? How comes it that you, who have ſo induſtriouſly tranſcrib'd all the other Memoirs of the Friends and Enemies of Mr. *Pope*, ſhould omit juſt thoſe, and only thoſe that mention Mr. *Curl?* Pardon me, Sir, but I cannot but look on this Omiſſion of doing proper Honour to ſo fam'd a Hero, which, it is evident, could not be accidental, as a great corroborating Evidence of what I have endeavour'd to ſhew thro' this whole Letter; that *William Ayre*, Eſq;

cannot

cannot but very ſenſibly feel every thing that affects Mr. *Edmund Curl:* But not to be tedious on a Thing that is by this Time, I hope, as clear to every body as it was to me, by that time I had read a few Pages of your Memoirs, I ſhall conclude with ſomething that may, however you may judge of it, perhaps be not improperly call'd an Act of Friendſhip to you; and as I am a Perſon ſomething leſs intereſted in Mr. *Curl* than you are, ſhall give here the one Thing wanting in your Volumes, the Story of this memorable Man, collected from the Authors who have oblig'd the World with moſt of the Things the reſt of your Work conſiſts of: And as I would adviſe all Perſons, for the ſetting right of ſuch Part of Poſterity as ſhall ſee theſe Memoirs of yours, to bind up this my Letter with them, I think your Work will by that Means, in ſome ſort, be render'd more compleat: And that all thinking People will ſay you ought to thank me for ſupplying ſo manifeſt a Defect in your Performance. And this Taſk, tho' I am nó more qualified for a Biographer than you are, yet, as I have the ſame Aſſiſtances, I doubt not but I ſhall go through with equal Glory.

AS to his Birth, Parentage, and Education, theſe, the two former eſpecially, being ſomewhat obſcure, and Nothing of Conſequence having been related about them, I ſhall not trouble the Readers of this Letter, with a formal Account of them; eſpecially, as the Publick may very properly expect, if this Gentleman go on in the Paths of Glory he hath hitherto trod, to ſee them given by a much abler Hand, among the accurate Annals of Mr. *G*——: And, as he is much more converſant with the Lives, Characters, *&c.* of Men of this Stamp, than I can pretend to be, I would not willingly anticipate a Thing, that will make ſo great a Figure, in all Probability, one Time or other, in his full and true Accounts.

All that I ſhall obſerve, as to his Education, is, that he ſhew'd an early Inclination to Letters, and Plagiariſm; inſomuch, that he was no ſooner taught to read, than getting into his Grandmother's Cloſet, he there would ſhut himſelf up whole Hours together, reading the ingenious Hiſtories of Mother *Shipton*, *Jack the Giant-Killer*, and ſuch others; the moſt ſurprizing Incidents in which he would get by heart, and at his Return to School vent them among his Fellow Students there,

Know-

as Matters that had happened within his own Knowledge; nay, ſo harden'd did he at length grow in this Practice; that, having gained by it, the Name of an ingenious Lad at School, he proceeded to recount theſe Things, among the Wonders he had ſeen; even to his before-mentioned Grandmother: And this the indulgent old Woman looking upon as a greater Proof of his Wit than his Lying, would never ſuffer him to be corrected for.

But his early Love of Bawdry, *&c.* was what was even more remarkable than what I have before ſaid of him; inſomuch, that having ſomewhere met with the Lord *Rocheſter*'s Poems, and that infamous Travaſtie of the firſt Pſalm, (which he has ſince caus'd to be attributed to Mr. *Pope*) he tranſcrib'd them in a fair Hand into a neat Book, which he had purchaſed with ſome Halfpence his ſaid Grandmother had given him.

His Love of Memoirs, and Secret Hiſtory, the Things he has been ſo fond of ſince, began almoſt as early as the reſt; for before he was twelve Years old, he compiled a Hiſtory of the Life and Character of the Parſon of the Pariſh, from what accidental Stories he had heard

heard him tell of himſelf, in his Converſations in their Family; and not judging it ſafe to appear as the Author of it, he hir'd a lubberly Boy of a neighbouring School, to write it over in his own Hand, and ſay he had been the Author of it.

But to leave theſe childiſh Tricks, and come to others of more Conſequence: About the Age of fourteen, his Grandmother beginning to think it Time he ſhould be put to ſome Trade or other, and adviſing with the before-mentioned Parſon, who had been himſelf an Author in his Youth; and conſequently knew the Profits his Works had brought to other People, however little himſelf had ſhared in them; told her, ſhe could but one Way give him an Opportunity of making the beſt of his natural Qualifications; and that was, by making him a Bookſeller.

This then was agreed upon, and to one of that Trade our Youngſter was ſent, where he ſoon found he had been but a paultry Dabler in his juvenile Performances; and in the Time of his Apprenticeſhip laid the Plan of that Conduct, by which he has ſince carried on that Trade as you, or rather, Mr. *Pope* obſerves, to Lengths beyond what it ever before arrived at. You I think, however, Mr.

*Ayre*, ought not, of all Men, to have repeated that Fling at him, that he has poſſeſs'd himſelf of ſuch a Command over many Authors, that they could not call their very Names their own; when you yourſelf are a flagrant Inſtance, that he dares not call his own ſo; and therefore ſurely ought to be allowed Repriſals.

But to come to his Character, in his riper Years, which I find very accurately drawn, in the Memoirs of *Grubſtreet*. The Number of Books of his own Printing, ſoon became greater than that of any other Bookſeller of the like Standing; and in this, as a Publiſher, he was more particularly famous; that whereas others, who had made a great Figure that Way, had generally run chiefly upon ſome one Branch of Learning, he, mov'd by nobler Views, had endeavoured to promote his Riſe by all, and tho' Biography, Secret Hiſtory, Natural Philoſophy and Poetry were his chief Favourites, yet no Part of Literature was wholly diſregarded by him, but that a perfect Encyclopædia of Arts and Sciences may be collected ſolely from the Books he has publiſh'd.

This, indeed, may ſeem a Paradox to thoſe who judge of the Number of Books printed for

for him by ſeeing his Name in the Title-Page, but that is a very uncertain way of judging ; there being a great many Caſes in which it is not at all proper, either for an Author or Bookſeller to put his Name to the Book he publiſhes, and it being eaſily proved that he has printed and ſold as many Books under fictitious Names, or under none at all, as under his own.

In ſhort, he not only carried the Myſtery of his Buſineſs farther than it ever had been carried before, but excell'd every one of his Contemporaies even in their own way: All Authors were at his Service, thoſe who would write for him he paid, thoſe who would not, he oblig'd to do it *gratis*, publiſhing a thouſand Things under their Names, which they had never ſo much as ſeen.

This extraordinary way of Trade, as it gain'd him the Admiration of the World, ſo it got him the general Envy of others of his own Trade, as well as the Hatred of all Authors but his own ; of which, that we may have an Opportunity to ſpeak the more at large, we ſhall now enter on the more memorable Actions and Sufferings of this egregious Hero. One of the firſt Things that made

made him talk'd of among the learned World, was that in 1716, ſoon after the Funeral of Doctor *South*, he having, by ſome Means procur'd an imperfect Copy of the Funeral Oration ſpoken by one of the King's-Scholars, publiſh'd it; upon which the reſt of that Fraternity, under Pretence of helping him to a more perfect Copy, decoy'd him to their Hall, where they amus'd themſelves for ſome time with toſſing him in a Blanket; and afterwards conducting him to the School, gave him the Diſcipline of the Rod, till that very Inſtrument of Vengeance wept, as *Shakeſpear* has it, for the poor Bookſeller's Sufferings.

Much about the ſame Time another and more dire Calamity befell him, of which his old Friend, Mr. *Pope*, gives a long and pathetic Account; the Story in few Words is this: He having a few Days before publiſh'd a ſatyrical Piece, entitled *Court Poems*, which in the Preface were attributed to a Lady, Mr. *Pope*, or Mr. *Gay*; the former Gentleman took the following Method of revenging himſelf: He found Means to get into a Room where *Curl* and *Lintot* were drinking, and convey'd Poiſon, or ſomething like it, into a Glaſs of Wine *Curl* was going

to

to drink, the Effect of which was, that a Purging and Vomiting ſeiz'd and held our unhappy Hero many Hours, and, as an able Hiſtorian of thoſe Days relates it, a Frenzy afterwards, that poſſibly he is not yet cur'd of, among the Symptoms of which, as recorded by that Author, I find that he ſpoke civilly to his Cuſtomers, ſing'd a Pig with a new purchas'd Libel, read *Rocheſter*'s bawdy Poems to his Wife, would have kiſs'd Mr. *Pemberton*'s Br——h by Violence; took a Clyſter for a Whipt-Syllabub, and made *Lintot* eat a Suppoſitory for a Radiſh, with Bread and Butter.

Another horrible Misfortune which this unhappy Bookſeller was plung'd into, and that by his own Avarice, the ſame Author gives a moving and pathetic Account of in a Paper, entitled, *A ſtrange, but true Relation how* Edmund Curl *went into* Change-Alley, *and, out of an extraordinary Deſire of Lucre, was converted from the Chriſtian Religion by certain eminent* Jews, *and how he was circumcis'd and initiated into certain of their Myſteries.* In this Paper the Author, after a great many memorable Inſtances of the fatal Effects of Avarice, proceeds to tell us, that Mr. *Curl* obſerving what immenſe Sums

Sums the *Jews* had got by Bubbles, *&c.* immediately turn'd his Mind from his Buſineſs, and reſolv'd to quit his Shop for *Change-Alley*. Whereupon falling into Company with ſome *Jews* at the Sign of the *Croſs* in *Cornhill*, they perceiving that his Godlineſs was only Gain, purchas'd of him the Apoſtle's Creed for an Eighth of an advantagious Bargain, the thirty-nine Aricles for a Bull, his Chriſtian Name for a Share in Bottomrye, and the four Evangeliſts for forty Pounds Subſcription in *Ram*'s Bubble. That on the 17th of *March* following he came to the aforeſaid Tavern, where, as he lay ſtretch'd on his Back under the Hands of the Prieſt, juſt as he was adjuſting his Sheers for the Circumciſion, *Curl* unfortunately jerking upwards, loſt five times as much as ever *Jew* did before, on which they finding that he was too much circumcis'd, which by the *Levitical* Law is worſe than not being circumcis'd at all, caſt him forth of their Synagogue, and refuſed to ſtand to any of their Contracts.

And now, when to theſe unparallel'd Calamities we have added, that in *February* One thouſand ſeven Hundred and twenty-ſeven, he ſtood on the Pillory, for publiſhing

ing a lewd Book, entitl'd, *The Nun in her Smock*; ſurely, the World muſt own, that no one Bookſeller was ever the Subject of ſuch accumulated Miſeries. That you could not choſe to be thus particular in the Life of this fam'd Enemy of Mr. *Pope*'s, I believe by this Time is pretty evident to every one, who has gone through this Letter: And that you may continue to its utmoſt Period your Life, as glorioufly as you have hitherto maintained it; provided, I mean, you equally merit ſuch Diſtinctions, is the hearty Wiſh of,

*SIR;*

*Your very ſincere,*

*tho' not very affectionate,*

*Correſpondent,*

J. H.